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The Gull

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter
Volume 76 • No. 5 May 1994

A Threat to the Fabric of Society

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Over the last several years, an organized attack on environmental laws and regulations has been launched by what is called the "wise-use movement." This movement, funded by major natural resource extraction industries such as mining, oil and gas, real estate development, forestry industry and agriculture, has thrived on disinformation and scare tactics. Unfortunately such tactics work and many environmental laws and regulations have been weakened as a result of the wise-use movement's efforts.

A recent example of this is the claim by the wise-use movement that protective regulations and laws may deprive citizens of their right to make profits and that our governments, state and federal, should reimburse such citizens who are so deprived. This new attack has at its core a philosophy of anarchy that threatens the very fabric of our society.

Our civilization is based on, among others, the principle that individuals have the right to lead their lives as they wish without interference from government so long as their actions do not harm their neighbors or community. Examples of this are obvious. An individual cannot poison his/her neighbors by siting a toxic waste dump on his/her property: there are zoning laws that insure our protection from such harms. A citizen cannot steal from a neighbor: there are criminal laws enacted to protect us from such harm.

The new assault on environmental

programs attacks this principle of necessary restraints on individual rights. These anti-environmental proposals argue that any inhibition of an individual right should be paid for by the government.

It all starts with the Constitution where it is clearly stated that if the government "takes" someone's property for the public good, e.g. to build a road across a person's land, then that person should be fairly compensated for the loss of that property. If a person feels that a government has unfairly "taken" his/her property the courts are available to resolve the dispute.

The new anti-environmental proposals stretch this concept to include any impact on an individual. For example, in a new bill, AB 145, introduced in the State Assembly by Bernie Richer (R-Chico), all state agencies would have to "...evaluate [their] proposed regulatory actions . . . to ensure appropriate protection of private property rights." This is all the bill requires, but the implications are severe.

Here's an example: if Cal-EPA, the state regulatory agency created to protect our environment, decided to ban a pesticide, that new regulation would have to be analyzed for "takings." Would the banning of the pesticide deprive the producing company of its right to sell that chemical? Would it deprive the farmer of his/her right to get the most crop per acre? The Richter bill suggests that the government may need to compensate the farmer and the

corporation for this impact on their businesses. While the answer may be and should be no, the cost to the agency to determine that answer may be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars in lawyers' time and the agency may decide it is simply easier not to ban the pesticide.

Another example would be if Cal-EPA decided to issue a regulation stating that no toxic waste site should be constructed within an urban community, the agency would first have to evaluate whether such a prohibition would deprive a landowner who wished to construct such a toxic waste site of his/her right to develop the land as he/she wishes, i.e., would such a regulation be a "taking." This may not appear to be a big thing, but in Colorado single agencies have estimated that the administrative costs of implementing a similar "takings" bill would be millions of dollars. In light of the state's budget crunch, Cal-EPA may decide not to propose such a regulation because the analysis would cost too much money. And presto . . . there is a toxic hot-spot sitting in your next-door neighbor's yard.

Is this penalizing the landowner? No. The Constitution allows any landowner who feels that his/her land has been "taken" to take the appropriate agency to court to seek compensation. This is how the system has worked for hundreds of years.

Is this penalizing you? You bet it is. It is depriving you of regulations created to ensure your health and safety.

Recently two doctors sued the U.S. government declaring that Medicare deprived them of their right to charge any amount they wished for their services. Essentially, they declared that Medicare acted as a "takings" of their right to make a living as they saw fit. Next we might see a burglar charging that our felony laws prevented him/her from making a living as a burglar and that the government should give compensation. Zoning laws that keep pornography stores out of

residential neighborhoods could be declared "takings" and society would have to recompense the owner or allow such stores in their neighborhood.

This is the route to anarchy. Society cannot reimburse everyone who is denied a desire when that desire would result in a social ill. Our present legal and government systems allow for legitimate "takings" and for compensation for such "takings." This new attack on "takings" is really a strategy to weaken existing environmental regulations and to avoid new ones by throwing the tremendous cost burden of "takings" analysis at environmental agencies. If these stratagems are successful, we will indeed have weaker environmental laws and we will have also seen a major disruption of the very fabric of our society.

Please help us resist these attempts to make "takings" a political issue. AB 145 (Richter) has already passed the State Assembly and is now before the Senate Judiciary Committee. State Senator Nick Petris is on that Committee. He needs to hear from voters who live in his district that this is an awful bill which he should vote against. Please write or call him, or your own state senator, at:

State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814
(510) 286-1333 (Petris)

Similar "takings" proposals have also been introduced in Congress as amendments to other legislation. If you have the time, letters should also be written to your congressperson and to Senators Feinstein and Boxer (see addresss on p. 36) urging them to vote against all "takings" amendments and bills.

Congressperson _____
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Support Golden Gate Park

San Francisco's Mayor Frank Jordan is about to present his proposed budget for fiscal year 1994-95. It is likely to include another round of cuts to Rec and Park's budget, which has been very seriously reduced over the past several years. In particular, Golden Gate Park has seen a steady deterioration of its "infrastructural" upkeep - fewer paid gardeners, for instance, and considerably less money devoted to reforestation. Anticipating that the new budget will continue this pattern of decline,

GGAS has joined with a coalition of various city groups to oppose unreasonable cuts in 1994-95. We hope to voice strong, effective opposition using phone calls and FAXs to the supervisors during the weeks when budget particulars are being hashed out. San Francisco members interested in lending support to this effort should contact Mike Healy at (415) 495-6320 (w) or (415) 664-3654 (h). We need all the voices we can muster for this worthy cause.

Current and Future Events

May 2: S. F. Conservation Committee. 7:30 p.m. Call office for location.

May 9: East Bay Conservation Committee. 7:30 p.m. GGAS office

May 12: General Meeting. 7:30 p.m., Berkeley. "Penguins in the Antarctic."
See back page for details.

June 1 -3: Hazardous Waste Operation and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) Class. Offered by the Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response of the Dept. of Fish and Game, this class is required of anyone who has any interest

in helping with clean-up (including treatment of oiled animals) after an oil spill. Phone Patricia Davidson, (916) 322-4452, for additional information.

July 9: GGAS Day at Candlestick Park. Giants vs. the Phillies. Short field trip and picnic at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area before the game. Call Alan Hopkins at (415) 664-0983 if interested.

August 13 - 29: Kenya with Alan Hopkins. \$4195 including airfare from S.F. Call Marcia or Tasha at (800) 223-6078 for information.

Conservation Notes

Arthur Feinstein

ALAMEDA NAVAL AIR STATION

I was musing recently on what it means to be an Audubon member. In a country the majority of whose inhabitants have less and less to do with the natural world Audubon folk represent a large percentage of those who still remember that there is a natural world and actually go out and enjoy it.

We play an important role in reminding our community that the earth is more than urban and suburban communities, cars and malls. When development threatens to engulf a new area it is Audubon that reminds our neighbors that it is not just open space that is being threatened but the homes of many wonderful living creatures, from birds and mammals to reptiles, amphibians, butterflies and plants.

This role carries with it a heavy responsibility. If we fail in educating our neighbors and our decision-makers, if we fail in reminding them about the importance of preserving a natural world, that very world tends to disappear. If we fail often enough so too will the world.

A case in point is the Alameda Naval Air Station. We have so altered and degraded our Bay Area environment that the Air Station, an artificial land-fill, is now the last-chance home for many of the species we love to see when we visit San Francisco Bay. The continued presence in the Bay of California Brown Pelican and California Least Tern, both endangered species, appears to hinge on the preservation of their habitat on the Air Station.

The largest breeding colony of Caspian Terns on the west coast is to be found in habitat located at the Air Station. Without that habitat and ongoing management to prevent nest destruction by feral cats and exotic red foxes this big and quite lovable tern may well be seen in drastically fewer numbers along the west coast.

The California Harbor Seal, the threatened Western Snowy Plover, many other raptor and shorebird species, and Northern California's second largest Western Gull breeding colony are all to be found at the Naval Air Station.

It is Audubon's job to remind our friends, neighbors and policy-makers that these wild creatures play an essential role in our world as integral links in the process of evolution, as key players in the mysterious business of ecological balancing and as creatures of beauty important to our spiritual and mental health. If we fail in getting our message through these creatures will be significantly reduced in numbers and may even disappear from the Bay Area.

So please help us succeed. Talk to your friends and neighbors about the importance of preserving the wildlife habitat at the Alameda Naval Air Station. Write to the policy-makers and

ask them to preserve this important wildlife treasure. It's not jobs versus birds. Even if the entire habitat area of nearly 600 acres is preserved, there will still be about 1,000 acres of Air Station available for the creation of new jobs. There is plenty of room for both people and wildlife.

The fate of the Air Station appears to be moving into the hands of a "Re-Use Authority" to be made-up of members from the City of Alameda, the City of Oakland, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and Congressman Ron Dellums' staff. Please write a letter to one of these and, if you can, send copies to the others.

Your efforts now can make a real difference to the future of San Francisco Bay. Remember, this small plot of land holds the future for the Bay's Brown Pelican, Least Tern and Caspian Tern populations.

Mayor William Withrow
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501

Mayor Elihu Harris
505 14th Street, Suite 510
Oakland, CA 94612

Edward Campbell, President
Alameda Co. Board of Supervisors
1221 Oak Street
Oakland, CA 94612

Hon. Ron Dellums
U. S. Congress
Federal Bldg., Suite 1000
1301 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94601

One last thing about being an Auduboner. While it carries a lot of responsibility, it also brings one a great deal of satisfaction and besides that we are the ones who go out and appreciate all the wonders that nature offers to us. It's not a duty, it's a joy. Write your letters but don't forget to have fun too.

Ed. note: On March 12, GGAS presented an all-day symposium on the wildlife values of the Alameda Naval Air Station, gathering together a group of scientists who addressed the above points among others. Congress has designated ANAS as a "fast-track" base closure, providing financial and administrative assistance in an effort to speed up local decision-making on the eventual disposition of the base and prevent the sort of factional disputes that have paralyzed decision-making at places like Hamilton Air Force Base in Marin. There is tremendous pressure at every level to act quickly. The purpose of the symposium was to establish environmental and ecological guidelines that could be used when discussing future uses of the base.

Interestingly, the Navy has been a good steward for the wildlife. The nature of the base is such that many areas have been kept free of development and human interference and in these areas, the wildlife has thrived. In addition, the Navy has

Conservation Notes (continued)

financed the annual monitoring of the Least Tern colony and any necessary predator control. Future managers of the area will have to find alternative sources of revenue. One proposal was to establish a trust fund, the income from which would be sufficient to continue the monitoring, safeguarding and maintenance of the colony.

A transcript of the day's session is available in the GGAS office. It is a far-from-dry document and you are heartily encouraged to stop by and read it.

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION AND WETLANDS: BAD NEWS

A friend of ours recently received a letter from Vice-President Gore that reinforced all the fears we had about the Clinton Administration. When last seen, ex-President Bush had established a no-overall-net-loss-of-wetlands policy and was riding hell-bent for leather to give away all our wetlands to the developers.

Not unnaturally, we hoped that the Clinton Administration, especially Vice-President Gore, would turn all that around. Well, think again. President Clinton has revealed a wetlands policy that is little better than George Bush's and, unfortunately, it stands a better chance of being enacted because Clinton's party is also in power in the legislature.

How bad is it? Well, as the Vice-President states, "... While the importance of wetlands preservation is clear, this Administration recognizes the need for economic progress. President Clinton has indicated his intention to streamline the regulatory process with regard to wetlands ..."

Economic progress? Well, a recent study performed by students at the Graduate School of Public Policy at U. C. Berkeley showed that California's 454,000 remaining acres of wetlands (we've lost 91% of our historic wetlands acreage) provide our state with economic benefits exceeding \$20 billion yearly. Why? Because wetlands help purify our water (thus avoiding the costs of new water treatment plants), they recharge our groundwater supplies, they help prevent and reduce flooding, they provide the nursery grounds and the base of the food chain for 75% of our sport and commercial fisheries, and they support myriad wildlife and are a major tourist industry attraction. (Another study showed that our nation's commercial and sports fisheries put \$111 billion annually into the economy and produce over 1.1 million jobs.)

So just what economic progress are we talking about? Oil and mining industries, real estate and development interests, and agribusiness. These are the economic interests to whom the Clinton administration is listening.

And by listening to these interests, the Clinton administration has developed a plan that is based on exchanging natural wetlands for man-made wetlands called "mitigation banks". Most scientists agree that we do not yet know how to create

wetlands that have all the functions of natural wetlands. The National Academy of Sciences recently stated that "mitigation" (i.e., wetland creation) should not be used to excuse wetland destruction. But the Clinton plan is based on this and, even worse, proposes giving federal subsidies to create those artificial wetlands. In other words the Clinton Plan would subsidize wetland destruction.

It's time for President Clinton to hear from all of us that he must work towards true wetlands protection such as is proposed in the Don Edwards bill, HR 350. Please write or call the President today. Tell him that what we need are stronger wetlands protections that will make it more difficult for wetlands to be destroyed, not schemes that will allow wetlands to be destroyed in exchange for questionable wetland "creation" projects.

President William Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20500
phone: (202) 456-1414

MORE WETLANDS TROUBLE

Current wetlands protection, such as it is, takes place through the federal regulation of wetlands-filling activities by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers overseen by the EPA. Current regulations are weak and the U. S. loses approximately 300,000 acres of wetlands every year to development of one sort or another. Even so, developers are not happy and want ever weaker wetland regulations.

The federal Clean Water Act, the legislation that authorizes the Army Corps to regulate wetlands-filling projects, is presently being rewritten and to-date things look grim indeed. The Senate Public Works and Environment Committee has approved a bill that seriously weakens existing federal protection of wetlands. Further weakening amendments are expected.

The Senate as a whole may vote on the Clean Water Act in early May. Please write Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer short letters telling them there should be no weakening of the existing federal laws regarding wetlands. A short message is all that is needed: **PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW EXISTING FEDERAL WETLAND LAW TO BE WEAKENED.** Your calls and letters do make a difference.

Senator _____
U. S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
Senator Boxer: (202) 224-3553
Senator Feinstein: (202) 224-3841

If you have questions about any of these issues, please feel free to call Arthur Feinstein at the Golden Gate Audubon office, (510) 843-2222, or at home at (415) 282-5937.

Field Trips Calendar

Sunday, May 1

Wildcat Canyon Regional Park

Leader: Malcolm Sproul (510) 376-8945

Saturday, May 7

Sunol Regional Park

Leaders: Gloria Markowitz and Ken Ackerman (415) 892-2910

Wednesday, May 11

Mini-trip to Briones Regional Park

Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman

Saturday, May 14

Bouverie Audubon Preserve

Reservations required by May 6th - phone (707) 938-4554.
Leader: Docent

For details on the above trips, see *The Gull* for April.

Saturday, May 14

Mountain Lake, San Francisco

Meet in the parking lot at the end of 15th Ave. (just north of Lake St.) at 8 a.m. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. We expect to see three or four species of swallows plus a variety of waterbirds and landbirds during this morning walk. Beginners welcome. Leaders: Mary Louise Rosegay and Jan Anderson (415) 922-5866.

Sunday, May 15

Mount Diablo State Park

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Rock City parking lot, one mile after passing through the South Gate entrance station. Take Hwy. 24 to Walnut Creek, then go south on I-680 to Danville. Take the Diablo Rd. exit, go left under the freeway and follow signs to Mt. Diablo State Park.

We will look for Rufous-crowned and Sage sparrows, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, swifts, swallows, woodpeckers and warblers. This riparian habitat should be productive. Bring lunch and liquids. Trip ends about 1 p.m. Leader: David George (510) 339-0765. \$ (*)

Sunday, May 22

Monterey Bay Pelagic Trip

Spring seabirds of the Monterey Sea Valley -- shearwaters, jaegers, albatross, alcids -- anything could be out there. Trip limited to 27 participants plus leaders. Cost: \$37.50. Send check to GGAS office to reserve place. \$

Saturday, May 28

Tennessee Cove, Golden Gate National Recreat Area

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at trailhead. From San Francisco, take Hwy. 101 north to Marin County and exit on Hwy. 1 toward Mill

Valley and Stinson Beach. After about one-quarter mile, turn left onto Tennessee Valley Rd. and continue to road end. Lunch optional for this half-day trip through riparian area to the shore. Beginners welcome. Leader: Bob Hogan (415) 668-0225. (*)

Saturday - Sunday, May 28-29

Lake Almanor, where the Sierra meets the Cascades

Trip is limited to 15 participants - reservations required. Saturday we will bird the Feather River for land birds and the lake for waterfowl and terns. Sunday we will look for birds of mountain meadow, including flycatchers, woodpeckers, three species of nuthatches and more waterfowl. Call for reservations and directions. Leaders: Helen and Paul Green (510) 526-5943. Early motel reservations advised. Campgrounds available. (*)

Friday - Sunday, June 3-5

Birding by Ear in Yosemite

The lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park are alive with singing birds in early June. A variety of habitats support a rich diversity of birdlife, typically including seven flycatchers (four *Empidonax*), three vireos, seven warblers, and many other species in full song and breeding plumage. Meet at the Big Oak Flat entrance on Friday, June 3 at 3 p.m., and Saturday, June 4 at 7 a.m. The meeting place is the large parking lot 100 yards inside the park entrance on Hwy. 120. (If you arrive later Saturday morning, meet the group in Hodgdon Meadow behind the Hodgdon Meadow Group Campsites.)

Nearby campgrounds include Hodgdon Meadow (res. required) and Crane Flat in the park, Carlon and Middle Fork (primitive Forest Service) on the road to Hetch Hetchy, and Sweetwater on Hwy. 120. Lodging on Hwy. 120 includes Yosemite Gatehouse (209) 379-2260, Evergreen Lodge (209) 379-2606, Lee's Middle Fork (209) 962-7408, and Buck Meadows Lodge (209) 962-6366. The meeting place is 30 miles from Yosemite Valley.

Bring warm clothes, raingear, rubber boots (wet meadows). Be prepared to pack a lunch and walk about six miles. Leader: Dave Cornman (510) 825-2106. \$ (*)

Wednesday, June 8

Mini-trip to Redwood Regional Park

Meet in the park at 9:30 a.m. Take the Warren Freeway (Hwy. 13), exit onto Redwood Rd. and proceed east about three miles to Redwood Gate, southern entrance to the park. Meet just inside small parking lot on the left. We should see Black-headed Grosbeak, Swainson's Thrush, Northern Oriole, Solitary, Hutton's and Warbling vireos. Bring lunch. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Saturday-Sunday, June 11-12

Yuba Pass and vicinity

On Saturday meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Yuba Pass Summit parking area (Hwy. 49) 15 miles east of Sierra City. Take 1-80

Field Trips (continued)

to Truckee, go north on Hwy. 89 to Sierraville and take Hwy. 49 west to Yuba Summit. (Or take Hwy. 49 northeast from Auburn for a slower but more scenic route.) We will bird the mountain areas for summer residents including dippers, flycatchers, warblers and Calliope Hummingbirds.

On Sunday meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of Hwys. 49 and 89 (by the saw mill) about 1 mile north of Sattley. We will caravan to Sierra Valley and look for many of the birds of the eastern Sierra including White-faced Ibis, Sandhill Cranes, Sage Thrashers and Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

Camping is available at the following U.S. Forest Service campgrounds off Hwy. 49: Wild Plum (elev. 3300') 2 mi. east of Sierra City, and Chapman Creek (elev. 5800') 8 mi. east of Sierra City. Lodging is available at Sierra City: Sierra Chalet (916) 862-1110, Buttes Motel (916) 862-1170, Herrington's Sierra Pines (916) 862-1151, Basset Station Motel (916) 862-1297, Sierra Buttes Inn Motel (916) 862-1191, and Yuba River Inn (916) 862-1122. Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. (*)

Plan Ahead:

Friday-Sunday, June 24-26

Lassen Volcanic National Park. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy (415) 564-0074. This trip is tentative, contingent upon Dan's release from jury duty. Call to confirm.

Thursday-Sunday, July 7-10

Backpacking to Snag Lake, Lassen Volcanic National Park. Leader: David Rice. (510) 527-7210.

For details on above trips, see June issue of *The Gull*.

Trips marked with \$ go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (*).

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty contacting a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chair (510) 524-2399.

Back Yard Birder

Meg Pauletich

JIZZ. I haven't mentioned it lately, but jizz is a vital ingredient for birdwatching. Jizz can't be taught but it can be acquired with experience in the field, or even in your back yard. You may already be practicing the art of jizz without realizing it. It certainly dazzles beginning birders.

Just what is jizz? It is a distinctive physical "attitude," totally apart from any specific field mark, which may help in certain critical field identifications (Christopher Leahy in *The Birdwatcher's Companion*). It's basically the combination of shape, posture and behavior of a bird. Knowing a species' jizz is yet another clue to add to specifics such as color, size, body and wing shapes, enabling you to nail down identification. Some birds have specific mannerisms which separate them from similar-looking birds; e.g., the Hermit Thrush has the habit of slowly raising its tail over and over while his look-alike, the Fox Sparrow, does not do this. Jizz (shape, relative size, manner of flapping and gliding) can be very useful in separating hawks in flight.

I don't consciously practice the use of jizz, but it's definitely in my bag of tricks. I just saw a small flock of sparrow-sized birds, but an inner alarm went off. They were decidedly more skittish than sparrows; their flight was low and undulating; their voices, weak and high-pitched, were unfamiliar to me. With my binocs, I was thrilled to see their distinctive yellow and black facial patterns -- Horned Larks! What a treat to see a bird I seldom have in my birding experience.

Later I noticed six to eight largish birds on a grassy knoll. Something about their (pudgy, short-tailed) shape and their

(flatish) heads and (longish) bills made me investigate further. Jizz frequently is the putting together of a number of "ish" parts to make up a whole bird. Personally, I don't see Western Meadowlarks often enough, so they're always a treat for me. Is their habitat declining? Seems as if they aren't in their usual haunts.

Knowing the shape of birds in flight is a part of jizz. Herons, egrets, cranes and storks are all large birds which point their toes in flight as precisely as any ballerina. But, how do they carry their heads? Are their necks held outstretched (cranes and storks)? Or are their heads carried on crooked necks (egrets and most herons)?

As mentioned above, behavior is a big part of a particular bird's jizz. The agitated, flitty actions of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet separate it from a near lookalike, the quiet-acting and nearly sedentary Hutton's Vireo. In our area, both can be found in wintertime (the kinglet migrates and does not breed here). The more you read, the more you'll know about specific birds. Some field identification books are very good about mentioning a bird's jizz, helpful in learning about the bird.

To accompany your use of jizz, try a little pishing. Remember, don't try this in front of non-birders or you will be branded slightly odd. To pish, either make sounds with your mouth only ("spish, whish, whish . . .") or kiss the back of your hand loudly (works better when not wearing lipstick). Using both the art of jizz and the art of pishing will launch you into sophisticated bird company, hopefully not to the exclusion of your non-birding friends.

Observations

Daniel Singer

Spring begins in earnest this month. As the days lengthen and warm, many of the resident birds are defending territories, finding mates and attending nests. Those species that spend their breeding season with us typically begin arriving in March yet many wintering species still remain and may even linger for another month. By month's end wintering waterfowl and gulls have departed much of our region and shorebirds are molting into alternate (breeding) plumage and may even be fairly easily identified!

Most reports of pelagic birds during March and into early April were from the San Mateo Coast. Single Black-footed Albatrosses on 3/11 and 3/18 from Pigeon Point (both RSTh) are indicative of this species' gradually-increasing numbers in our offshore waters during the spring. A Flesh-footed Shearwater, always a rewarding find, was seen on a pelagic trip off San Francisco on 4/1 (MLE). Eighty Sooty Shearwaters from Pigeon Point on 4/3 (RSTh) helped mark the beginning of this species' return in mass to our region. Two Short-tailed and ten Black-vented shearwaters, also off Pigeon Point on 3/20 and 3/27 respectively, were the most reported this month (RSTh, DPo). A **Townsend's Shearwater** reported from a pelagic trip out of Half Moon Bay on 3/17 was very interesting. To date there are no fully-accepted records of this species in California. All prior claims from California documented by photographs have proven to be Manx Shearwaters. Observers should bear in mind that Manx Shearwater can have white flank patches and that much more than this needs to be documented in order to support any claims of Townsend's Shearwater. Birders are strongly encouraged to use a combination of field marks when identifying any bird, particularly a rare one. It is interesting to note that three to four Manx Shearwaters were well seen and photographed on a pelagic trip out of Westport, WA, on 4/2 (pers. comm. JM, DR). These sightings, taken in

conjunction with prior fall and summer records from the west coast and Gulf of Alaska, suggest Manx Shearwater may be breeding somewhere in the North Pacific. I am unaware of any prior reports of small "black and white" shearwaters from California waters this early in the year. The season's only report of Fork-tailed Storm-petrel was a single bird off Pigeon Point on 3/11 (RSTh).

Reports of various waterfowl species as well as the number of individuals decreased dramatically as the month progressed. Many of these reports consisted of known wintering birds lingering into spring. Additional noteworthy sightings included a blue-morph Ross' Goose along Sandy Mush Road, MER, on 3/6 (CKf); two Eurasian Green-winged Teal in San Rafael on 3/13 (JM) and four Blue-winged Teal at Davidson Marsh, Novato, 4/3 (RS); a male Tufted Duck in Alviso, SCL, on 3/6 (MMR); and a female Oldsquaw at Crespi Pond, MTY, on 3/28-29 (NB). Lake Merritt's wintering Barrow's Goldeneyes dwindled to one by 3/28 (HG).

Up to fourteen Lesser Golden-Plovers wintering at Spaletta Plateau, Point Reyes were seen at least through 3/19 (DSg, m.ob.). Two at Pescadero Beach, SM, on 3/30 may have been early spring migrants, but probably wintered locally (BMcK). A Franklin's Gull at the Hollister Sewer Ponds on 3/28 is one of very few ever reported from San Benito County (SRo). Four Glaucous Gull reports consisted of five birds during a four-day period, 3/19-22, from Sonoma, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties (RSTh, BDP, NLe, RMe). An impressive 184 Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen on 3/20 at Pigeon Point (RSTh). Alcid numbers along the San Mateo coast peaked towards the end of the month with up to thirteen Marbled Murrelets and eighteen Rhinoceros Auklets seen at Pigeon Point on 3/27 (RSTh).

Up to three Lewis' Woodpeckers were seen at Mt. Burdell, Novato, from 3/

2 through 3/28 (KWe, GFi). The male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker wintering in Davis was present through 3/23 (m.ob.). Both Eastern Phoebe in our region this winter lingered well into the month: the Davis bird up to 3/12 and San Jose's at least through 3/27. Most remarkable was Marin County's first **Vermillion Flycatcher**, an adult male seen at Point Reyes, on 3/16 and 3/17 (DHo, NW, RS, GFi). The Tropical Kingbird at Lake Merced was present through the end of the month (m.ob.). Three Cassin's Kingbirds were seen in San Benito County, two at the Hollister Sewer Ponds on 4/1 (DSg) and one in the Santa Ana Valley on 4/3 (CKf), where they are rare but regular spring migrants.

Bank Swallows returned to San Francisco on 4/3 when four were seen over Lake Merced (DSg). Four Sage Thrashers were reported from Fresno County on 3/22 (BRe). Two Tennessee Warblers in SF on 3/26 and 31 (DSg, ASH), a Black-and-White Warbler along Gazos Creek, SM, on 3/31 (BL) and, amazingly, an Ovenbird in SF on 3/27 (ASH) presumably wintered locally. On the other hand, a MacGillivray's Warbler at Coyote Creek, SCL, (SCR) and another at Tomales Bay State Park, MRN, (MP), both on 3/15, are best considered early spring migrants.

The Green-tailed Towhee in San Jose was last reported on 3/13 (MJM, m.ob.). A Clay-colored Sparrow in a private yard in Stockton on 3/7 had reportedly been present since the week before (DGY). The **Field Sparrow** in Martinez was last seen on 3/11 (KFr). The majority of Swamp Sparrow reports this month came from SCL where up to eight were seen in San Jose's Model Airplane Sky Park on 3/27 (SCR). As many as **seven Chestnut-collared Longspurs** continued at the summit of Sierra Rd., SCL, through 4/4 (m.ob.). Six of these were singing and displaying males in alternate plumage! Except for a few individuals in SF, Red Crossbill reports were limited to western

MAY MEETING: PENGUINS IN THE ANTARCTIC

Thursday, May 12 7:30 p.m.
Northbrae Community Church
941 The Alameda
Berkeley

Explore the Antarctic Peninsula, Falkland Islands, South Orkneys and South Georgia with our speaker, Karen Pihl, at our May program in Berkeley. The slide-illustrated program will begin at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 12th, at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley.

The seven penguin species that inhabit the Antarctic Peninsula will be the stars. Ms. Pihl has captured their mating behavior, how they care for their chicks and other elements of penguin natural history on film. She will also introduce us to the other inhabitants of this icy wilderness, from Elephant Seals, Humpback and Killer whales to skuas and Steamer Ducks. Sequences of albatross courting and nesting behavior will also be featured. Ms. Pihl's trip to the Antarctic also included visits to research stations run by Argentina, Poland and Brazil.

Karen Pihl teaches biology and ecology at Las Positas Community College in Livermore.

This is our final meeting of the spring season and also the GGAS Annual Meeting. Come meet your fellow GGAS members as well as the officers for the coming year and be entertained by Karen Pihl's tales of penguins and their compatriots. The next meeting will be September, 1994.

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Observations (continued)

Marin County where up to twenty-five were seen at Five Brooks, Pt. Reyes (m.ob.). Lawrence's Goldfinch was widely reported from throughout the Diablo Range. In general, numbers were low with most observations involving less than ten birds (m.ob.).

Observers: Nora Bain, Florence G. Bennett, Bob Brandriff, Nathan Crawford, Michael L. Ezekiel, Carter L. Faust, George Finger, Kathy Francone, Frank Gardner, Helen Green, Steve Hampton, David Hoffman, Alan S. Hopkins, Clay Kempf, Michael Larkin, Nick Lethaby, Leslie Lieurance, Bill Lofthouse, John S. Luther, Michael J. Mammoser, Bert McKee, Richard Merriss, Joe Morlan, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Michael Perrone, David Powell, Bob Reiling, Don Roberson, Mike M. Rogers, Steve C. Rottenborn, Steve Rovell, Dan Singer, Rich Stallcup, Maury Stern, Emilie Strauss, Ronald S. Thorn, Kaynor Weishaupt, David G. Yee

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As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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